



# Friends of the Herefordshire Light Infantry Museum



Newsletter

Number 6 February 2012

**Welcome:** Your committee welcomes you to this the sixth Friends' newsletter - we hope you enjoy it.

2011 has again been a significant year for the Museum building on the successes of and the clear direction given for the future of the Museum in 2011. The Digitisation process is moving ahead and there has been considerable discussion about the format of the website and how much information should be published and in what format. A key consideration has been to maintain the currency of the website, to make sure that new information and articles are constantly being published to maintain viewer interest and ensure 'return visits'. This means that the technology cannot be too demanding and the site can be managed by the Trustees – who are not all computer wizards! This has all taken some time to get right but hopefully within the next month or two. We will first establish the website with some basic information and then add additional information as it is prepared for web publication; it is also planned to have a monthly feature. 2014 sees the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of World War One and it is planned that the website will publish the history of the Regiment during that time – month by month exactly 100 years later.

We continue to work in liaison with other organisations, we work within the Herefordshire Museum's Alliance, The Museum, Libraries and Archives (MLA) structure, The Army Museum Ogilby Trust and of course the Shropshire Regimental Museum who are a great support in providing advice and practical support; we have recently established link to The Herefordshire Regiment on their Museum website:

[<http://www.shropshirehistory.org.uk/html/search/verb/GetRecord/theme:20071204094810>].

The Museum remains aware of potential changes to the Territorial Army which may affect Suvla Barracks and therefore the Museum; there are currently no firm plans that we are aware of, but the Trustees continue to keep their contingency plans current.

The Museum has been opened on several occasions during the year and took part again in The Heritage Open Day (HOD) scheme, where 'heritage' sites throughout the country, including many normally closed to the public are opened. The Museum has been well supported by group and individual visitors through the year.

**Museum Acquisitions:** Accessions to the Museum continue at a steady trickle; we remain keen to acquire a Efficiency Medal (Territorial) named to The Herefordshire Light Infantry.

Key amongst the acquisitions have been:

- An original 1st Battalion brass shoulder title from 1914 – see later article.

- Whilst not donated to the Museum, at the HOD we saw a beautiful Rifle Volunteers Shooting trophy in the form of a Highland Plaid brooch which included the animal badges of the old RVC company badges, an historically important and probably unique piece.

**Your Committee:** Your committee remains unchanged, with all retiring members being voted in at the AGM:

<i>Patron</i>	The Countess of Darnley
<i>President:</i>	Gen Sir Peter de la Billiere
<i>Vice-President</i>	Mr Bill Jackson
<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr Martin Jolly
<i>Vice-Chairman:</i>	Maj Dave Seeney
<i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>	Maj James Hereford
<i>Members:</i>	Maj Bob Hayden
	Maj Nigel Jones
	Lt Col John Marsham
	Maj Tony McVeigh
	Capt Hugh Patterson
	Sqn Ldr John Scott
	Col Andy Taylor

**Drill Halls Project:** This is a national project to record Drill Halls throughout the UK [<http://www.drillhalls.org/Counties/CountyPageHerefordshire.htm>]. Photographs of Herefordshire Regiment Drills Halls (from we think about 1910) held by the Museum have been published on the project website.

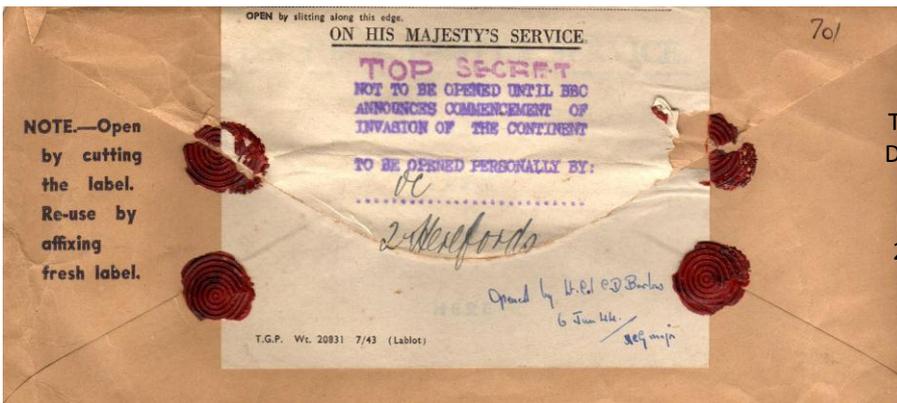
**Pill Box Project:** This is another national project which aims to record the military history of the UK by recording the location of all known (still existing or not) pillboxes. [<http://www.pillbox-study-group.org.uk/>]. The website graphics are a bit garish but there is much interesting information on a somewhat narrow but unknown subject. Herefordshire played a key role in the defence of the industrial heartland of the Black Country in the face of a potential threat of a landing in South Wales and the Home Guard and local defences (including pillboxes) were a significant element of this defence. If any one wants to know more then I can recommend the following books: The Mercian Maquis and The Defence of Worcestershire and the Southern Approaches to Birmingham in World War II. Very little is known of the Home Guard in Herefordshire and the Museum is very keen to learn more about 'Dad's Army' in Herefordshire.



This picture was published in The Hereford Times and is annotated on the reverse 'Taken by Mr WJ Parrott, Hereford Times in August 1923 after the Herefords returned from camp at Porthcawl. Bandsman T Barber (aged 10), youngest member of the Battalion Band, presents arms to former Colour Sergeant J Bethell who joined The Herefords (presumably The Hereford Rifle Volunteers) in 1864.

Regimental number 78 Armourer Sergeant J Bethell was awarded the Volunteer Force Long Service Medal (which he is wearing in this picture) in 1895. Sgt J Bethell is also noted as a recruiting sergeant during World War One.

The surname Bethell features throughout the history of the Regiment with Bugler W Bethell of The Herefordshire Rifle Volunteer Corps serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteer Service Company, Kings Shropshire Light Infantry during the Boer War in 1900. Several Bethells served during the First World War, in the interwar years, during the Second World War, and there was a Bethell serving in The 1<sup>st</sup> Herefordshire Cadet Battalion (Light Infantry) in themed 1970's. Is the Bethell their father, Grandfather, Great Grandfather and/or Great Great Grandfather?



The envelope containing orders and news of D-Day 1944, as received by The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. A fascinating artefact preserved and presented to the Museum by Mrs P Gale in 2003. It gives an impression of the status of the BBC.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Brass Shoulder Title – 1914.

The 1<sup>st</sup> (and only) Battalion of The Herefordshire Regiment in 1914 wore a brass shoulder title as shown below:



When a 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was formed to handle the mass of recruits in 1924, the original members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion felt slight 'miffed' at the loss of their exclusivity. An instruction was given to 'file down' the '1' on their titles to form a '1' and this retain their 'original' identity'; this was achieved with varying degrees of ability and generally the modification is easily detectable. At the Heritage Open Da in September an example of one of these modified shoulder titles was donated to the Museum.



### Dates For The Diary:

- 10 Mar - Herefordshire LI (Rifles) Officers' Dinner
- 11 Jun - LI Assn Day (Shrewsbury)
- 19 Jun - 'Flag Raising', Armed Forces Day – Hereford Shire Hall
- 11 Jul - Queens Diamond Jubilee Event - Hereford
- 14 Jul - Sounding of Retreat & Reception - Hereford.
- 1 Sep - Care For Casualties Dinner, Homme House
- 10 Sep - Heritage Open Day (HOD Museum Open Day)
- 15 Sep - Association Dinner
- Oct tbc - AGM & Lunch
- 18 Oct - Rifles Concert – Royal Albert Hall